



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
PROGRAM PLANNING AND INTEGRATION
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

FEB 4 2005

Dear Reviewer:

In accordance with provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, we enclose for your review the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Designation and Minimization of Adverse Impacts for the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (Groundfish FMP).

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), in cooperation with the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) prepared the enclosed DEIS. This DEIS evaluates the effects of a comprehensive strategy to conserve and enhance EFH for those species managed under the Groundfish FMP. The comprehensive strategy to conserve EFH includes measures to identify and describe EFH and measures to minimize to the extent practicable adverse fishing impacts on EFH, among others, and is designed to be compliant with the provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. NMFS and the Council are considering the proposed action because it will provide both the agency and the Council with the necessary information to account for the function of groundfish EFH when making fishery management decisions; ensure that this EFH is capable of sustaining groundfish stocks at sustainable levels that support sustainable fisheries; and finally, assure that EFH is a healthy component of fully functioning ecosystems. In addition, this DEIS responds to the requirements of the Court Order in the American Oceans Campaign et al. v. Daley et al. lawsuit.

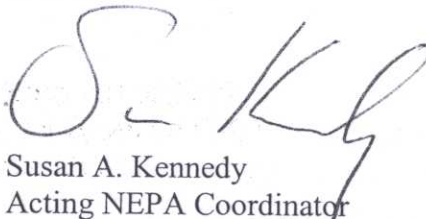
Additional copies of the DEIS may be obtained from Maryann Nickerson, NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, BIN C15700, Bldg. 1, Seattle, Washington 98115-0070, 206- 526-4490. The document is also accessible through the Northwest Region's website at <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov>.

Comments or questions on this document submitted during the agency's public comment period must be received by May 11, 2005. Written comments should be submitted by mail to D. Robert Lohn, Regional Administrator, c/o Maryann Nickerson, 7600 Sand Point Way, NE, Bldg. 1, Seattle, Washington 98115-0070, 206- 526-4490. Comments may be submitted by facsimile (fax) to (206) 526-6426. Electronic comments may be submitted by e-mail to GroundfishEFHDEIS.nwr@noaa.gov; include in the comment subject line the following document identifier: Comment on 2005 Pacific Coast Groundfish EFH DEIS.



A copy of your comments should be submitted to me by mail to the NOAA Strategic Planning Office (PPI/SP), SSMC3, Room 15603, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910; or by fax to 301-713-0585; or by e-mail to nepa.comments@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Kennedy', is written over the typed name.

Susan A. Kennedy
Acting NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure